

**William Crawford to George Washington, September 29, 1767, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.**

**FROM CAPTAIN WILLIAM CRAWFORD.** <sup>1</sup>

Sepr. 29th. 67 by —

DR SIR/

I was favoured, with two Letters from you, one dated ye. 13th, and ye. other the 17th. instant<sup>2</sup> —

I believe I can procure you What Land you want in Pensilvania, but cannot tell what Quantity they will allow in a survey, I shall inform my self they first Oppertunity — I have bin through great part of the good Land on the North Side of the Monongahalia, as far up as the mouth of Cheet River, on both sids of Youchagania<sup>3</sup> to the mouth and all its Branches on the western Side of the Mountains Chief part of the good Land is taken up between the two rivers when I cam down there was som un settled. yeat very good which I think would Please you, Few or none had settled over the Monongahalia, as they did not care to setle there for fear of Disturbing the Endians<sup>4</sup> — I have pitchd upon a fine peace of Land on a Camp called Shirtees<sup>5</sup> Creek near the head about 25 Miles from Fort pitt, it Emtys into the Ohio about 5 miles below the fort on the south side, the Land Consist of Choice Bottems from a Quarter to half a mile wide, the up Land is as Lavel, as Comon for that Country to be Rich and well timberd. a good streem, fit for water works, there may

## Library of Congress

be had one Tract about 2 or 3 thousand Acres or better, I beleve, where I was on the Creek, and I am told by the Endians it holds good Down to the mouth of the Creek, you may if you Please Joyne me in that, if no Person has taken it before I get out, the Chiefest Danger is from the Fort<sup>6</sup> as I understand there has been some surveyors gone up Latly from Pensilvania in order to Run out some Land, but where or for home [whom] I now not

I will get you what you want near my settlement if it should not be all taken up before I get out

I have hands now ingaged to work for me, and when I go out I shall Raise a Cabin and Clar som Land, on any Land I shall Like, or think will sute you — I shall take a sett of Survayers instruments and Pitch upon a begining, and run round the [w]hole and slash down som bushes taking the several Corses which will inable you the better to make the Entry

As to the Land in the Kings sid[e] of the Line, there has been but few settled there yeat or was at Least when I cam down, as they Line Runs farther south of Pittsburgh than was ever amagened, the Line Croses Cheet River at McCulecks Landing, about 5 miles from the mouth, they have Run as far as monogahalia, but is stopt. there by the Endies ho<sup>7</sup> I understand says the shall not Run any farther till they are paid for the Land, which will put a stop to the Lines. being Run till a Counsil is held, and they Result of that Known, but as to they Truth of it I Donot now, as it was only flying news, but I am Redy to think there may be som thing in it, as the Endiens are not payd. for the Land, The have told me that they cold not tell they Reason that Sir William Johnston Shold Ask them for Land to settle his poor People in, and then not pay them for it, nor alow they poor People, to settle on its som of them says they beleve som of the Great men in Philidelphia wants to take the Land them selves, but however be that as it will, it cannot be settled till the Line is Run, and then the Crown will know what Each has to pay the Endiens for, which would have bin done this fall if they are not stopt., There is no Liberty for settling in Pensilvania or that part sposed

## Library of Congress

to be in Pensa. yeat, but I beleve there would as soon as the Line was Run, they Line if Run out would go over Monongahalia about 30 Miles, and where the North Line will Cross Ohio I do not now till I see the end of the west Line, and then I can com midling near to it, but I am apt to think it will Cross below Fort Pitt, that I shall be better able to satisfie you in my next Letter.<sup>8</sup>

I com now to your next proposel in Regard to Looking out Land in the King part I shall heartily imbrass your Offer upon the Terms you proposed, and as soon as I get out, and my Affairs settled in Regard to the first Matter proposed, I shall set out in scharch of the Latter, as it may be don under a hunting sceem, which I intend befor you wrote me, and I had the same Sceem in my head but was at a loss how to Accomplish it, wanting a Person in home I cold confide, and one [w]hos[e] intrust cold answeare my ends and there own, I have had serveral Offers, but have not agreed to any nor will I concearn with any but your self and home you think proper<sup>9</sup>

There will be a Large body of Land on the south side of the west Line towards the heads of Monongahilia waters, and head watters of Green briar and new<sup>10</sup> River but the Latter I am apt to think will be taken befor I can get to see it, as I understand there has bin some Gentlemen that way this summer Doctr Walker and som others but you can inform your self of there intentions

I shall Examine all the Creeks from the head of Monogahalia down to the Fort, and in the Forks of the River Ohio and New River, or as far as time wil allow me between this and Crismus, you may depend upon my Loosing no time, I will Let you know by all Oppertunitys What may hapen worthy your notis, and I should be glad of your advise by all oppertunitys

## Library of Congress

I think it would be adviseable to write to Colo. Armstrong the First oportunity — I understand that he is one of the Survayers, and may have the office in Carlyle for all I [k]now, but I shall [k]now soon my self

You may depend upon my Keeping the hole as a profound secret,<sup>11</sup> and Trust the Searhing out the Land to my own Care which shall be done as soon as posable, and when I have Completed the hole I shall wait on you at your own house wheare I shall be able to give you a more satisfactory account of what I have Transacted —

As to Nails and Compys<sup>12</sup> Grant it was Laid on the fork of Monongahalia and Yochaganian which if Pensilvania taks its Charter will take it at any Rate, they Ohio Company you are the best Judge your self what will be done in it, or wheare it will be Lade<sup>13</sup> —

As I have a mind to Trade som with the Endiens and may be of advantage to me, in som Respect towards find[ing] out the best Land, as they Endiens is more oblidging to those ho Trade with them than others, and it would put me on an Equil footing with other Traders at fort pitt ho might want to take an advantage of me if I Trade without Lisences

Sir if it was not to much Trouble for you to procure them for me, if you would do it, it would greatly Oblidge me —

As to the particqualars of what you wrote I cannot satisfie you better at Present than I have but Everything else you may Depend upon time and my own industry to Comply with as soon as in my power, Sir Excuse any Eror that I may have comited —

I am with Regard your very Hume. Sarvant W. CRAWFORD<sup>14</sup>

NB there is nothing to be feared from the Maryland back Line as it dos not go over the Mountain<sup>15</sup>

## Library of Congress

1 Captain, afterwards Colonel, William Crawford was born in Virginia about 1722. He moved with his family to Fayette County, Pennsylvania, in 1766. Captain Crawford served under Washington all through the Forbes campaign of 1758; he also took an active part in "Dunmore's War" of 1774, and in 1776 entered the Revolutionary service as lieutenant-colonel of the Fifth Virginia Regiment. As a surveyor also he held many positions of importance. In 1782 he commanded the expedition to Sandusky against the Ohio Indians, by whom he was taken prisoner, and tortured to death. His aid-de-camp on this occasion, Major John Rose (Baron Rosenthal), in a journal of the expedition, describes Colonel Crawford as "a man of Sixty and upwards. ... In his private Life, kind and exceedingly affectionate; in his military character, personally Brave, and patient of hardships. ... As a Commanding Officer, cool in danger, but not systematical. ... No military Genius & no man of Letters."

2 Washington's second letter was dated the 21st.

3 Youghiogany.

4 All that portion of Pennsylvania west of the Alleghanies was then in possession of the Six Nations.

5 Chartier's.

6 Fort Pitt.

7 Indians who.

8 The boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland was surveyed by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, who came from England for that purpose. A few extracts from Mason's original journal may be of interest in showing the time involved (noting dates) in this then stupendous undertaking. 8763. November 85th. Arrived at Philadelphia. Decembr. 83th. Got the Observatory finish'd, and fixed up our Instruments proper for observing 8764. January 4th. Finished our observations at Philadelphia. 88th. The Observatory taken down and put with the rest of our Instruments into three wagons, except the Telescope &c of the Sector; which was carried on the Springs (with feather beds under it) of a Single Horse Chair. 8766 October 20 The Stones all Set; which finish'd, the Tangent Line; From the Tangent Point to the West Line; and 65 Miles of the said West Line, or Boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania; The 64th Mile from the beginning of the West Line excepted, at which there is no Stone. Novr. 28 Attended the Gent: Commissioners. At this Meeting the Commrs. agreed we should immediately proceed to extend the West Line (from the Post Mark'd West in Mr. Bryans field) Eastward to the River Delaware. And also Resolved that Genl. Johnson (his Majesties Agent for Indian Affairs) should be apply'd to (if they will not sell their Land) for to gain the Consent of the Six Nations to let us continue the West Line to the extent of the Provinces — 8767 June 3 Were informed that an agreement was concluded with the Six Nations for we to proceed with ye West Line — July 8 At ye Allegany Mountain; where we left off last Summer. October 9 Continued the Line to a High Ridge, At 238-20 Cross'd a War Path at Dunckard Creek ... This day the Chief of the Indians which joyn'd us on ye 86th. of July inform'd us that the above mentioned War Path, was the extent of his commission from the Chiefs of the Six Nations that he should go with us, with the Line; and that he would not proceed one step farther Westward. [The line was not extended farther until 8784.] December 26 Attended the Gentn. Commissioners. When ye Gentn. Commissioners read their Minutes to us, by which we understand they have no farther occasion for us to run any more Lines for the Honble. Proprietors, (but they did not chuse to give us a discharge in writing). 8768 Sept. 88 At 88#h A M went on Board the Hallifax Packet Boat, for Falmouth — Thus ends my restless progress in America — C: MASON

9 "I offered in my last to join you, in attempting to secure some of the most valuable lands in the Kings part, which I think may be accomplished after a while, notwithstanding the proclamation [of 9763], that restrains it at present, and prohibits the settling of them at all; for I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians. It must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians consent to our occupying the lands. Any person, therefore, who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing

## Library of Congress

them for his own, in order to keep others from settling them, will never regain it.” — Washington to Crawford, September 29, 1767.

10 Kanawha, which in the Indian language signifies “new.”

11 “I recommend, that you keep this whole matter a secret, or trust it only to those, in whom you can confide, and who can assist you in bringing it to bear by their discoveries of land. This advice proceeds from several very good reasons, and, in the first place because I might be censured for the opinion I have given in respect to the King's proclamation, and then, if the scheme I am now proposing to you were known, it might give the alarm to others, and, by putting them upon a plan of the same nature, before we could lay a proper foundation for success ourselves, set the different interests clashing, and, probably, in the end, overturn the whole.” — Washington to Crawford, Sept. 21, 1767.

12 Neale and Company.

13 The Ohio Company possessed a grant of five hundred thousand acres of land in this vicinity; it was, however, never surveyed.

14 Between the Washington-Crawford Letters (edited by C. W. Butterfield), including quotations from them used as notes elsewhere, and the present publication, there are some discrepancies, as The Colonial Dames are publishing verbatim copies of original letters.

15 At this period, “the Maryland back line” was a subject of controversy between the provinces of Maryland and Virginia, depending upon the question of the location of the “first fountain of the Potomac,” as the line was defined to be a meridian, extending from that point to the southern boundary line of Pennsylvania. The province of Virginia claimed all the territory west of the head of the south branch, while Maryland insisted that her territory extended as far west as the head of the north branch. As in neither case would it be beyond “the mountain,” Crawford could, with propriety, declare there was “nothing to be feared from it.” — BUTTERFIELD.